

From: Michael Hinatsu

Sent: Monday, October 29, 2018 8:20 PM

To: sg@un.org

Cc: RosaLaura Romeo; Sara Manuelli; Ross E. Butler; Baktybek Abdrisaev; Samuel Elzinga; Andrew Jensen; Angela Landa; Colin Fuller;

Subject: Urging Changes in ECOSOC Reviews for SDGs Implementation



History & Political Science

October 29, 2018

His Excellency, Mr. Guterres, António
Secretary General of the United Nations
First Avenue at 46th Street
New York, NY 10021
E-mail: sg@un.org

Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations,

We are writing to you as representatives of students and youth, who contribute to the implementation of the UN 2030 Development agenda and the mountain targets in particular. Since 2011 the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University, (www.utahimf.org) through student engaged learning initiative has advocated for sustainable development for mountain communities, who are among the poorest and most neglected by the international community.

During 2018 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, through sponsorship of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, an NGO in general consultative status with ECOSOC, UIMF members advocated for implementation of mountain targets by making an oral and submitting a written statements. The forum provided an important opportunity for them and other civil society groups and member states to do so because six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under its review contained three mountain targets.

To our regret, none among 47 nations, which made Voluntary National Reviews at 2018 HLPF, ever mentioned mountain targets. It was not a surprise then, that the Ministerial Declaration of the forum, E/HLS/2018/1, does not have any language about mountain targets at all - one more example of further marginalization of the mountain communities.

We urge the UN Secretariat, the President of ECOSOC, and especially 47 nations who provided VNRs at this year's HLPF to change existing procedures by

ensuring that in 2019, all targets under the reviewed SDGs will be discussed and reported in the final documents of ECOSOC forums. In addition, the process of adoption of final documents of the forums has to be transparent, allowing for civil society and all interested parties to watch debates of the member states' representatives on that matter.

We would also like to provide for your attention a copy of our statement (enclosed below) submitted for the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held in 2019. It expresses both our concern and request to UN officials and member states to make suggested above changes in the ECOSOC procedures and prevent disenfranchisement of rights for sustainable development for many communities around the world by neglecting review of designated for them targets.

If you will have any questions related to the statement or our activities, please do not hesitate to communicate with our contact person Michael Hinatsu, by sending an email to jeffyangler@gmail.com, or calling him by phone: +1 (208) 571 - 5810.

With all due respect,



Samuel Elzinga,
President,
UIMF



Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev,
Lecturer
Advisor,
UIMF

On behalf of: Andrew Jensen, Vice-President, UIMF
Colin Fuller, member, UIMF
Michael Hinatsu, member, UIMF
Angela Landa, member, UIMF

CC:

UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres
President of ECOSOC, Her Excellency Ms. Inga Rhonda King

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the Principality of Andorra to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations
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Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Togo to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations

Mountain women and mountain targets have to be in the focus of 2030 Development Agenda

The delegation of Utah Valley University to the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women would like to thank the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences and Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Commerce for allowing us to contribute to the priority theme of this year's forum: social protection systems, access to public services, and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. These issues are crucial for sustainable development of communities, families, women and girls in mountain areas.

At this forum last year, we emphasized that mountain women and families are among the poorest and most disadvantaged worldwide and at extreme risk of neglect by the international community. A study, “Mapping the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity,” done by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations jointly with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, a coordinator of sustainable mountain development agenda globally, found out that 39 percent of developing countries’ mountain populations, including women – 50% in rural areas – is vulnerable to food insecurity, and that during 2000 – 2012, 30% more mountain people suffered from food insecurity. Climate change, lack of access to education and jobs, and political turmoil to name a few further place mountain communities and women in dire circumstances.

The United Nations designated three mountain targets as an important tool for implementing the 2030 Development Agenda in mountain areas: Target 6.6: by 2020, protect and restore water related ecosystems, including mountains; Target 15.1: by 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular, mountains and drylands; Target 15.4: by 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

By participating at two United Nations forums on implementing different Sustainable Development Goals during 2018, members of the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University, found out a lack of reliable mechanisms that would integrate mountain targets into those forums’ final documents. This further marginalized the mountain communities globally and disenfranchised their right for sustainable development. During the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, they co-hosted, through the engaged learning initiative, a side event, “Advocating for rural and mountain women globally through student engaged learning;” a parallel event, “Education for sustainable development to empower rural and mountain women,” and advocated for mountain women through the written statement sponsored by a group of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. In addition, they were able to integrate multiple times language about mountain women in the Working Draft of recommendations from non-governmental organizations to Zero Draft Document of the Commission. Unfortunately, proposed language has been removed from the final document during the negotiations by state representatives. They did it in a non-transparent way during closed sessions, which demonstrated a marginal role of civil society in decision-making at the UN and, as a result, the neglect of the mountain targets as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Similarly, during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018, Utah Valley University students advocated for the implementation of mountain targets as an important step to bring mountain communities in the focus of the 2030 Development agenda. They did that by making an oral statement during general debates and through the written statement and thus contributed to the efforts of the Mountain Partnership, which co-hosted with the Government of Andorra a side-event titled “Mountains and the 2030 Agenda.” The forum provided an important opportunity for them and other civil society groups and member states to do so because six Sustainable Development Goals under its review contained three mountain targets. At the same time, none out of the 47 nations submitting Voluntary National Reviews at the forum, including

the 14 states - members of the Mountain Partnership, mentioned mountain targets in their official statements. As a result, the Ministerial declaration of the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, never mentioned the mountain targets at all.

The student engaged learning model of Utah Valley University has proven its success for students' professional growth, international recognition and for the advocacy of mountain women and sustainable mountain development agenda of the United Nations since 2011. Academic institutions elsewhere could provide similar benefits for their students by adopting it. However, their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda cannot be successful if they will not be able to bring real changes to the mountain communities, families, women and girls worldwide.

We would like to urge the United Nations to make changes in the process of reviewing implementation of Sustainable Development Goals by member states during relevant forums of the Economic and Social Council. It needs to have an oversight mechanism ensuring that implementation of all targets affiliated with goals under considerations are included in the Voluntary National Reviews and in the final documents. In addition, the process of adoption of final documents of the forums has to be transparent, allowing for civil society and all interested parties to watch debates of the member states' representatives on that matter.

This needs to be done urgently, in order to improve the procedure of review of Sustainable Development Goals' implementation by nation states and make them a part of the 2019 forums of the Economic and Social Council. This will ensure then also that this forum will include in its final document a proper language about social protection systems, access to public services, and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and empowerment - in particular of mountain women, girls, their families and communities.

This statement is co-sponsored by the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, an NGO in general consultative status with ECOSOC, and the Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands and Development and Commerce, an NGO in special consultative status with ECOSOC.



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